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CHRIST
REMBRANDT
GIFT OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART FOUNDERS SOCIETY

BUST OF CHRIST BY REMBRANDT

The Bust of Christ by Rembrandt (Fig. 1) acquired by the Art Institute represents a type of Christ which was essentially a creation of Rembrandt's, and which has become popular through his art, especially through works like *The Hundred Gilder Print* or the *Supper at Emmaus* in the Louvre (Fig. 2), two compositions in connection with which,—possibly as a study for the Louvre picture,—our painting was executed.

As in the Louvre composition, Christ is represented at the moment in which his spiritual personality becomes obvious to his disciples, who did not recognize him at first. The simply-clad figure emerges from a dark background, the face surrounded by deep brown curls and lighted with a pale and visionary light. The mouth, slightly opened, seems to speak, no longer to those surrounding him, but as though to a far distant person, to whom his mind has suddenly turned. When we see in the Louvre picture the astounded expression of his disciples, we understand better the meaning of the far-away look in his eyes. Kindness is combined with the transcendental expression of his face in a manner which only Rembrandt was able to depict.

The picture was presented to the Institute by the Museum of Art Founders Society at the time of the Rembrandt Exhibition, as a reminder of this memorable event, which brought to the museum eighty paintings by the master from all over the United States, and which helped to increase the attendance of the museum to 87,000 visitors in a month. During the exhibition many friends of art in the city expressed the hope that it would be possible to keep one or another of the paintings permanently in Detroit. But only a few of those on exhibition were for sale, and still fewer within reach of the funds of the Foun-

ders' Society. It was possible, however, to acquire the Christ which, through a sale of the Soviet Government had only recently left Russia, where it had been in the possession of the Imperial family in the Pawlowsk Castle at Leningrad for generations.

Though the painting be only of comparatively small compass, it is surely not less characteristic of Rembrandt's art. Nothing, in fact, could be more typical of the art of the great master than his character studies of men with faces marked by deep expression and human sentiment, studies which form almost a third of his complete life work. No collection, therefore, which wishes to give a complete idea of Rembrandt's spirit, can be without a representation of this side of his art. Since the Art Institute owns thus far an excellent portrait of his first Amsterdam period and one of his most impressive religious subjects, *The Visitation* of 1640, the acquisition of his Head of Christ is more than welcome, all the more since it represents a different and later phase of his art.



FIG. 2. THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS
THE LOUVRE, PARIS

The Christ head had been formerly dated by Dr. Bode, Dr. Hofstede de Groot, and the writer, as late as 1658, although the connection with the type of the Christ in the Emmaus Supper at the Louvre had been noticed. Within the last decade, however, several other busts of Christ by Rembrandt have been rediscovered, and a careful comparison of these different studies with his religious paintings of the period (one of the most important of which, *The Lamentation Over Christ*, from the collection of John Ringling in Sarasota, Florida, exhibited in our exhibition, bore the date 1650), made it clear that they should be dated somewhat earlier, at the time of the Louvre picture, about 1648,—a conclusion to which Dr. Bredius had already come in connection with another study of Christ which he acquired for his collection at the Bredius Museum in the Hague. The Christ heads which Rembrandt executed about 1648, obviously from the same Jewish model, are the following: (1) In our collection, (2) Bredius House, The Hague, (3) John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, (4) Unpublished, English private possession, (Fig. 3) (5) Metropolitan Museum, New York (Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher), (6) Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin. Our picture is nearest to the Christ in the Louvre composition, while the picture in the Bredius Collection is more like that of the Emmaus Supper in the Museum at Copenhagen, executed by Rembrandt in the same year; the Fletcher head is connected with the *Lamentation Over Christ* in the Ringling Collection. This type of Christ with the dark brown eyes and hair is obviously somewhat different from the blonde Jewish model which Rembrandt used about 1660, of which the *Resurrected Christ* in the Bache Collection is a typical example.

The picture has been reproduced sev-



FIG. 3. CHRIST
ENGLISH PRIVATE COLLECTION

eral times: in Dr. Bode's standard work of Rembrandt's paintings (No. 591), in *Klassiker der Kunst*, edition 1909, by the writer (page 391), in *Collections Privées Russes*, 1910, in the Sale Catalogue of Art Treasures from Russia, Berlin, June, 1929, and in the catalogue of the Rembrandt exhibition in the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1930. In Hofstede de Groot's *Catalogue Raisonné* it is described under No. 161. In addition to the Detroit Exhibition, it was exhibited in the Exhibition from Private Collections in Russia, Staryé Gody, No. 290.

The painting is first mentioned in the well-known Amsterdam collection of the eighteenth century, J. van der Marck Ezn, where it was sold on the twenty-fifth of August, 1773. In the first part of the nineteenth century it came to Russia, where it is first mentioned in the collection of the Emperor Paul I, then in that of the Grand Duke Constantine.

—W. R. VALENTINER.



FIG. 4. A PAINTER'S ATELIER
MICHAEL SWEERTS
AMSTERDAM 1624. ROME 1651?

A PAINTER'S ATELIER BY MICHAEL SWEERTS

It is well-known that one of the charms of Dutch seventeenth century painting—if we consider the subject matter—lies in its representation of the daily life of the period, themes which were thus far unknown in art. We receive here for the first time an excellent impression of the occupations of the women, the different professions of the men, of the working classes as well as of the upper classes,—the bourgeois and the aristocrat. Among these professions that of the artist especially interests us,

since in the periods previous to the seventeenth century all we know of the life of artists is obtained only from literary sources or occasionally from religious paintings such as the Legend of St. Lucas, in which the artist was apt to tell something of his own profession under the cover of an adequate subject. At the time of Rembrandt not only have the self-portraits often assumed a more genre-like appearance, as in the etchings or drawings of this master or in paintings by Frans Hals and Vermeer, but

frequently the artist represents himself in the midst of his surroundings, as in the compositions of Gerard Dou, Jan Steen, Gabriel Metsu, Adriaen van Ostade, and others. Depicting the artist's studio becomes a favorite task with some painters, and with none is it carried out in a more fascinating manner than with the rare Michiel Sweerts, who, though painting in Italy, where he had gone to live, took with him his Dutch ideas and continued to depict these subjects, which were quite unknown to the Italian artists.

Michiel Sweerts is one of those Dutch masters about whose life we know less than about his paintings, for their appreciation has been comparatively recent. We know only that he was born in Amsterdam in 1624 and that he went to Rome in 1647, where he was still working in 1652, as the inscription on our painting (Fig. 4) relates: "Michiel Sweerts Roma fecit 1652." He is perhaps the most original among those numerous Dutch artists who went to



FIG. 6. SELF PORTRAIT (?)
ACADEMY COLLECTION, LENINGRAD

Italy and accepted there the Italian Baroque style. His not very frequent paintings were formerly often mistaken for works by the French painters Le Nain and other artists, who like Sweerts came under the influence of the Caravaggio School, employing in their composition strong contrasts of light and shade, and setting off their strongly lighted plastic figures against a heavy dark background. His style is, however, so individual, that since the careful compilation of his works by Dr. W. Martin (*Oud Holland*, 1907), it is scarcely longer possible to confuse him with other painters. We know a few scenes of interiors by him, with drinking or card-playing boys, somewhat in the style of the early works by Pieter de Hooch, some Italian street scenes, several portraits in a genre-like manner, and—most typical of all,—paintings of artists' studios (Amsterdam and Haarlem Museums), which give an idea of the way in which seventeenth century painters taught art, and to what an extent they employed plaster casts for instruction.

Casting in plaster was invented, it



FIG. 5. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN
MUSEUM OF HERMANNSTADT, HUNGARY

seems, by some of the early Renaissance sculptors, helping greatly to spread the Italian Renaissance movement throughout the world, as the casts were taken mostly from classical and Renaissance models. At the time of Sweerts the trade with casts for decorative and instructive purposes had become considerable in the North as well. We know, for instance, that Rembrandt owned a large collection of casts after the antique, and that he even dealt in them for collectors of similar interests. We can easily understand the pleasure people took in this new invention by means of which famous works of art could be distributed in quantities at a low cost, at a time when travelling was difficult, when photography did not exist, and when it was difficult for the artists to procure models for the study of the nude.

Our painting shows how, like all new movements, it was overdone, and how the artists, in typical baroque fashion, filled up every corner of their studios with masses of plaster casts, ranging from casts after the Greek and Roman sculptures to those of the most recent times, such as the Cupid which the boy holds in his hand,—possibly a work by Duquesnoy, the Flemish sculptor who worked in Italy.

While Sweerts gives a truthful representation of the painter's studio, the motive of the masses of casts depicted in his painting most likely interested him mainly for pictorial reasons, since the combination of white spots with the warm brown and gray tones, in addition to dark blue and vermilion, was in accordance with his color schemes. He

uses the white forms of the casts for the concentration of light in his compositions, even when these casts had no special relevance to the content of the picture, as may be seen in his little-known portrait of a young man in the Museum at Hermannstadt (Hungary); and that he was specially fond of the contrasts of white tones with black and brown nuances is shown by the charming portrait, possibly a self-portrait, in the Academy Collection at Leningrad. These two paintings in connection with our own explain other pleasing qualities of the art of this master: his refined, almost classic draughtsmanship, which connects him with artists like B. van der Helst or Terborch, and to some extent with such artistic ancestors of modern painters as Ingres; his typical Dutch pleasure in detailed execution, as shown in the still life of musical instruments in the foreground of our picture, or in a detail like the fly sitting on the boy's coat; and his romantic sentiment, which best expresses itself in his representation of handsome youths with regular features and long curly hair.

Our painting is mentioned several times in the literature on the artist: in W. Martin's articles in the *Burlington Magazine* and in *Oud Holland*, 1907, and in A. Wurzbach's Dictionary of Artists. It has been exhibited twice, in the Royal Academy Exhibition, London, when it was in the possession of Sir George Donaldson, and in the exhibition of Dutch Genre Paintings in the Gallery of Dr. Schaeffer in Berlin in 1930, and is illustrated in both exhibition catalogues.

—W. R. VALENTINER.

EXHIBITION OF MOHAMMEDAN DECORATIVE ARTS

An exhibition of Mohammedan Decorative Arts will open at the Institute October 15, to continue through November 15. It will consist of rare carpets of the sixteenth and seventeenth cen-

turies, pottery, metal work, glass, textiles, specimens of stucco reliefs, ivories and other objects, and will include a number of unique and hitherto unpublished pieces.



FIG. 7. THE PROMENADE
WILLIAM GLACKENS

THE PROMENADE BY WILLIAM GLACKENS

William Glackens, who is now represented in the Art Institute by a mature and characteristic canvas (Fig. 7) is a significant figure in American art of the present century. Painting in this country may be said to have begun the new century with an exhibition of the "Eight Painters," of whom Glackens was one, in 1906. Some of the artists in that group had shown together in 1904, but it was the collective exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery in 1906 that first brought the liberal group to public attention and

began a swing toward new ideas in painting.

In the latter part of the last century two influences had directed American painting—that of Sargent and Paris, and that of Munich. By about 1900, however, the dominating figure was William M. Chase. His teaching in New York and Philadelphia handled the weak solution of Sargent that was teachable, and from his overflowing classes he turned out a flood of men and women painters whose interest was facile brush-

work. The only two men of the older generation capable of dealing with American life in a powerful and individual manner were isolated—Winslow Homer in his retreat on the Maine coast and Thomas Eakins unheeded in Philadelphia. The conservative "Ten American Painters" (of whom Chase was one) ruled the National Academy and exhibitions had become little more than displays of brushwork and reflections of holidays abroad, while the work of younger men was steadily excluded. This was the situation when "The Eight"—Arthur B. Davies, Glackens, Henri, Lawson, Luks, Prendergast, Shinn and Sloan—held their own exhibit in 1906 and broke the dominance of the old ideas. They had studied the realism of Manet and Degas as well as Sargent and the Impressionists; they subordinated brushwork to thought; and they painted the American scene. There was, of course, a great outcry and much use of the adjective "brutal."

Glackens was at that time already a force in American art, but there was much of his development still before him. He was born in Philadelphia in 1870, received his training at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and began his career as an illustrator. In order to work for the press he went to New York and has since made his home in that city. American illustration has for a quarter century benefited by the influence of his work. He dealt graphically with the life about him and his technique had much to do with introducing a more direct, supple manner into illustration. In 1906 he went to France and came under the influence of the Post-Impressionists. From that time he began to develop as a colorist. Renoir especially, whose ready, uncritical delight in the world of sight was like Glackens's own attitude of mind, affected him profoundly. By the famous "Armory Show" in 1913 he had added so brilliant and animated a use of color to his fine drawing that Guy

Pène du Bois called him "the best eyes in America." His work has since attained the ripe and quiet style which is represented by *The Promenade*.

In our canvas the similarity to Renoir's manner is evident. Yet Glackens assimilated Renoir's color into his own personal and unmistakable style, with more intense tones and a heavier impasto than one finds in the latter's work. He added also to fluid, luminous color the illustrator's grasp of character that makes the essentials of the scene—the grace and poise of the child, the donkey's shaggy quaintness, the flood of sunlight on the hill behind—vividly real. The composition is not elaborate, but is carefully organized. The picture is divided into three vertical bands by the figures of the child and donkey in the center, which form a compact unit bounded at the top by the pyramidal outline of the arms and hat of the child. Within this area four sharp tones of color are struck—an intense red, a purplish blue, yellow and white—rather strongly contrasted, yet held in relation to each other. The same colors are repeated and recombined, in less intense combinations, in the background on either side; but variety is gained by building the colors of one side into soft, puffy shapes of trees and a hill climbing to the top of the canvas, and on the other into terraces climbing in sharp angles to a block-shaped house and a heat-suffused sky. In its simplicity and avoidance of any overstatement, as well as in its attitude of unaffected pleasure in the scene, it is typical of Glackens' thought.

The picture is a portrait of the artist's daughter, Lenna, and was painted in 1927 in the south of France, probably at Venice. It was exhibited at the Art Institute last April in the Sixteenth Annual Exhibition of American Art, from which it was purchased to represent in our galleries the mature work of this important living American artist.

—E. P. RICHARDSON.

MODIGLIANI AND PASCIN

If these two artists, by both of whom the Museum has for some years owned unpublished examples, are mentioned together, it is not so much because their art is in any way related as because both died not long ago in Paris without having been recognized by the general public as the excellent painters they were. The lack of recognition from which they suffered during their lifetime seems to prove that even in our enlightened age nothing is more difficult than to recognize lasting value in living art. It has often been said that we are nowadays too much inclined to appreciate artists who are just beginning to "arrive," as though we were apparently trying to make good the wrong done by former ages to most of the great masters during their lifetime. And, indeed, the search for new masters in Paris and elsewhere every season, the sensational tendency to have new masters represented every year in international exhibitions, makes it hard to

believe that an artist of any merit would escape the eye of the public. Yet it happens again and again that somewhere an artist will die in poverty, and that the public will suddenly become aware that it was just he who had deserved recognition more than others.

As in former days the fact remains that nearly all art which is very popular during the lifetime of its producer seems to be of little value to posterity, and that a generation or two must pass before the public recognizes the real merit of gifted artists who died in obscurity. Artists are always in advance of their time; their new creations are shocking to the untrained eye, since we are inclined to judge from the standards we have been brought up with and forget that new standards are set by every original creation. We are apt to adopt before new works of art the attitude which Beethoven's music master had when he criticized him, saying: "Your exercise is wrong—you have used consecutive fifths, which are forbidden by the rules of music," whereupon the young composer answered: "They are right; I have authorized them!" We must not imagine that modern art can be appreciated without serious study; it is always easier to understand the old masters than the modern ones.

The course which history has taken can scarcely be regretted, however, when we remember that great art has seldom been produced by artists who have been spoiled by too early recognition, but more frequently by men who had to fight constantly against the contempt of their contemporaries, a fight, however, which developed their best qualities. Modigliani and Pascin, both artists of Jewish origin who came to Paris from other countries, the one from Italy, the other from Bulgaria, are examples of such experiences.



FIG. 8. YOUNG WOMAN
AMADEO MODIGLIANI



FIG. 9. YOUNG GIRL
JULES PASCIN

The life of Modigliani was especially tragic. Born in 1884 in the Ghetto district of Leghorn, he was brought up under the poorest circumstances, his father dying while he was still young, leaving the mother to care for the large family. When as a youth of fourteen he became dangerously ill with typhoid fever, his mother had to promise to let him become a painter if he got well again. In 1906 he went to Paris, where he soon became friends of the leading painters of the new movement, such as Picasso, Braque, Derain and Matisse. His means of livelihood, however, were small, and he had to accept the meagre remittances sent him by his mother. Not being fit for military service, he did not enter the war, and in spite of periods of success endured dreadful hardship until his death in the beginning of 1920.

It seems superfluous to attempt to characterize his work here, for three books have been published about him

recently, and in 1929 there was an excellent showing of his works in New York (De Hauke Gallery); frequent criticisms of his art have also appeared this year in connection with the exhibition of his paintings in a special room of the International Exhibition in Venice (arranged by L. Venturi who in *L'Arte* also published some of Modigliani's letters to his friend Oscar Ghiglia, an artist who is likewise represented in the Institute). The female bust portrait we own (Fig. 8) shows his peculiarly fascinating conventionalization of the figure in elongated forms and lines of an almost Gothic rhythm, while the blue background forms a charming contrast to the reddish hair and the delicate enamel-like tones of the face. The type of the woman with the three curls hanging over the forehead reminds one of Jeanne Hébuterne, the friend of Modigliani whom he painted so often, and who was so fond of the artist that she did not care to survive him, throwing herself out of the window after his death.

Pascin (Fig. 9) is an entirely different character, although a certain languid subconscious expression in his figures may connect him with Modigliani, perhaps more as a common characteristic of many artists of our time. In contrast to the broad and deep color planes of Modigliani's paintings with their simplified, solid outlines, his style has something indefinite, his thin colors being applied to the canvas with a seemingly careless touch in pale tones and light, uneven waves, his outlines characterized by nervous, broken curves. He inclines to sketches of a lighter nature, of a more illustrative character, while Modigliani even in his drawings keeps to abstract classic lines of almost monumental effect.

Jules Pascin, who developed very early, and who went through all the stages of a modern decadent life, feeding his over-cultivated mind with the

most *raffiné* literature, which he is fond of illustrating, shows in his complicated intellectuality his descent from the aristocracy of one of the oldest races on earth. His father came from an old Spanish Jewish family, his mother, who was born in Serbia, from an Italian, while Pascin himself was a native of Bulgaria, having been born in Widdin in 1885. He derived his interest in the Orient from the fact that he was nursed as a child by a Turkish woman. He preserved the internationalism of his breeding throughout his later life. He has been called a modern type of the errant Jew, for there is hardly a country of the civilized world where he has not been at home at one time or another. The fact that he once became a naturalized American citizen accounts for his sometimes being included among American artists, though scarcely with justice, for the place where his art flourished most naturally was Paris.

Before he went to Paris, he had already some reputation in Austria and Germany. At the age of fifteen he was discovered by the Austrian writer, G. Meyrink, the author of the weird *Golem*, and recommended by him to the editor of the best satirical magazine in Germany, the *Simplissimus* in Munich, for which he became for several years an

illustrator. In 1905 he settled in Paris, but his restless nature tempted him to long journeys, first to Africa, then to America, and the sketches which he made touring through Algeria, Tunis, Martinique, Havana, Florida, Louisiana, and elsewhere, form a charming and entertaining part of his work.

After he had thus exhausted his nervous energy by continually new sensations, his pleasure in life was considerably reduced, and he decided to settle down to real work in Paris. In the early summer of the present year he killed himself, having complained during the last few weeks of how difficult it was for one of his temperament to endure any longer the obligations to dealers, to whom he had to deliver a certain number of his paintings in order to make a living—a curious contrast to Modigliani, who, though constantly ill, clung to life to the last, working incessantly on new problems.

While in his illustrations and sketches Pascin touches on a great variety of subjects, in his paintings his motifs are more limited. Our picture represents his favorite subject, the portrayal of a poor young girl who is just awakening to consciousness, dreaming sadly about the possibilities of her future life.

—W. R. VALENTINER.

NEW APPOINTMENT TO INSTITUTE STAFF

Mr. Edgar P. Richardson has been appointed by the Civil Service Commission through competitive examination to the position of Educational Secretary. Mr. Richardson is a graduate of Wil-

liams College, Massachusetts, 1925, doing graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania and later studying painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

CALENDAR OF LECTURES AND EXHIBITIONS

EXHIBITIONS

- October 15-November 15. Exhibition of Mohammedan Decorative Arts.
October 15-November 15. International Exhibition of Lithography and Wood Engravings.
Mid-autumn (date to be announced in the public press). Contemporary Japanese Painting.

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

Concerts by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit at 3:30 p. m. every Sunday will be followed by lectures by members of the staff.

October 5. Lecture by Benjamin March, Curator of Asiatic Art, "On Behalf of Seven Generations."

October 12. Lecture by E. P. Richardson, Educational Secretary, "Pieter Bruegel."

October 19. Lecture by E. P. Richardson, Educational Secretary, "Art from the Gardens in the Desert."

October 26. Lecture by Marion Leland, Museum Instructor, "Our Great-great-grandmothers' Pride: Furniture and Glass."

REGULAR GALLERY TALKS

(Every Tuesday afternoon at 4:00 and Friday evening at 7:30)

October 7 and 10. The Most Ancient Arts: Prehistoric and Egyptian galleries.

October 14 and 17. The Art of Persia and India.

October 21 and 24. America before the Europeans Came: Pre-Columbian gallery.

October 28 and 31. The Far East: Chinese and Japanese galleries.

GALLERY TALKS DURING SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

During special exhibitions there will be a gallery talk on every Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 p. m. upon the exhibition. The program for October will be:

October 15. Mohammedan Decorative Arts.

October 22. International Exhibition of Lithography and Wood Engravings.

October 29. Contemporary Japanese Painting.

TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES AND MUSICAL PROGRAM

Historical Musical Recitals will be given by Frank Bishop, Curator of Music, on every other Tuesday evening at 8:30.

October 7. Renaissance and XVII Century Composers.

October 21. Bach.

The lectures in the Tuesday Evening Course will be announced in the public press and the Museum Bulletin.